

EXHIBIT H

Patrick Thoresen



15th February 2021

The Honorable Claude M. Hilton
United States District Judge
United States District Court for the Eastern District of Virginia
401 Courthouse Square
Alexandria, VA 22314

Dear Judge Hilton,

I am a mailman in Minnesota. I come from a large Catholic family in the midwest and have university degrees in history, business administration and international management. I am also a veteran. I served in the military intelligence branch of the Army. I studied Arabic, Russian and Uzbek languages. My last duty assignment was at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba where I interrogated detainees from the former Soviet Union. Prior to this service, I worked as a civilian for five years in Russian and Kazakhstan. I met my wife (now a US citizen and pharmacist) in Almaty and after our marriage we moved to Minnesota to raise our family.

I met Peter Debbins soon after he moved into our neighborhood in 2005. We have many things in common and quickly became friends. Peter would often say that we're living the dream in the American city with the highest quality of life. Peter does like to boast or put a positive spin on all our lives in Saint Paul and it was true that we each were enjoying raising our families. For the five years we lived three blocks from each other, we were good friends.

Peter Debbins is a devoted husband and family man. From the many meals, picnics and outings that we shared over the years, it is clear that he values his wife and children and their wellbeing. While I knew Peter, he seemed to have the midas touch. He bought a house and the housing market went up. He bought used cars and then resold them at a higher price. He invested in gold and its price climbed. And he could move effortlessly from one job to a more lucrative job. He wasn't just lucky because I saw how he worked hard to get success. He kept his eyes open for new job opportunities that could improve his family situation. He considered a position in South Dakota, I think the salary was attractive to him as was the lower tax rate, but ultimately decided against the move because the public schools were inferior to our neighborhood school.

Peter did attempt to do business in the home city of his wife. Despite Peter's skills, efforts and the contacts of his in-laws he was unsuccessful and briefly dejected. Doing business in the new Russia is difficult. The lack of transparency and rule of law along with corruption, crime and xenophobia and difficult obstacles to overcome. I attribute Peter's declaration that he is a "son of Russia" to the prevalence of Russian xenophobia rather than anything political. He is proud of his ability to speak Russian and socialize with native Russians. He is good at both. Saying that one is a son of Russia opens doors closed to foreigners. As an aside, when I worked as an interrogator I often convinced detainees into writing statements and later would use these statements in order to coerce them to do something they initially resisted. Anyway, Peter knows the history of Russia and the misery Russia has inflicted on millions of people including Peter's family. He understands why many Russians support (or fear) Putin as a strong leader. He is aware that the regime is not as strong as it appears.

When Peter moved to Virginia, he was quite happy that with his new salary he could afford a larger house and have very good schools for his daughters. He also found the work intellectually interesting and allowed him the opportunity to use his language, intercultural, management and people skills. As ever, Peter was happy with his life and frequently invited our family to visit DC and stay with his expansive house. In October 2015 we decided to visit DC and as a result our friendship ended. To this day it is not clear what happened but it may reflect on Peter's character. As long as I've known him Peter was a generous host. So it was strange that after we agreed on the visit, he reneged without offering an explanation. I can understand there being a multitude of reasons why he couldn't open up his home at this time. He knows, I know this and wouldn't be overly upset and could change my plans on the day of my arrival. For some reason, Peter could not say, "I'm sorry I can't at this time". Even without an explanation, I think our friendship could have continued. In modern terms, he "ghosted" us. The only explanation that satisfies me is that Peter always wants to put the best face on everything Peter. If our visit would reveal that anything he projected about his amazing house, lovely wife, perfect children, exciting job were not true, then he had his reason to not see us. It hurt and our bromance was done. Perhaps this characteristic of Peter led him to this serious mistake. I have no doubt that he is experiencing great remorse for his actions. He knows that what he did was wrong and has caused great suffering to his relatives, friends, wife and daughters.

I was surprised when I learned that Peter was arrested. I gave him a good character reference when he applied for a top security clearance that led him to Virginia. I hadn't heard from him in five years, but I couldn't imagine that he sought to betray his country. As someone who has served in the Army and

worked in foreign countries, conspiracy to provide intelligence to aid a foreign government is a serious offence.

Peter Debbins is hard working, self confident and ambitious. By his account, he was doing well and fitting in with his team at the logistics company in the USA. Peter tries very hard to be liked and to win people over to his side.

One item in the indictment really bothers me. The depiction of Peter as proRussian and antiAmerican isn't right. Peter had strong political views. We had numerous discussions. He was against the policies of a particular political party but that doesn't make him antiAmerican. He thought that the US was too involved in the foreign affairs of countries where America doesn't have a strong national interest. This is not a rare thought among soldiers and veterans. Peter enjoys expressing his opinions, the freedoms to live, work and play as he wishes and the security this country provides for his family.

Peter and I didn't talk much about our army days. He seemed proud to have served but wasn't boastful about this to me. The only bitterness he expressed was about his medical treatment for his injured shoulder. He frequently showed me how his range of motion was limited because the shoulder didn't heal well. At least he got some disability percentage for the injury from the Veterans Administration.

Peter did have an odd fascination with the role of Russia in religion. Peter is quite religious. It is often in his mind and a frequent topic of discussion. At first my impression of Peter was that he wasn't religious. He said that when his mother died he pretty much gave up on religion. As long as I've known him his interest in religion has been quite keen. He mentioned that he frequented prayer meetings with his christian coworkers. His christianity had an apocalyptic sense. He frequently read the book of Revelations and openly wondered if there are signs that we are living in the end times. He often conjectured that Gog and Magog were the peoples of Russia and Islam.

Peter and I spent many an enjoyable hour fishing on the Saint Croix River. He was good company. On one day we went out in a rubber raft with an electric trolling motor. We had some good luck but on the way back to the launch the battery died. We had to go upstream but the water was shallow and the current was pretty fast. Rowing back was slow. Peter decided that one of us should get out of the raft and pull it upstream. We argued our cases. I said I should haul us back because it was my battery that died, I had better sandals, and I didn't have a bum shoulder. Peter argued that he was bigger, stronger, younger and prettier than I and with that he grabbed the rope and hauled us all the way back upstream.

Peter is a decent, hardworking guy who loves his family. He was a good friend from 2005 to 2010. He likes to present himself in a good light and

doesn't readily admit mistakes. I suspect he thought the items listed in the indictment that he provided were of little or no intelligence value. When I worked at the SERE school we taught special forces how to resist interrogation. We instructed them to delay giving information because intelligence is perishable. After 24-48 hours the enemy won't be able to act on it. I suspect Peter gave the information because it had little value. I think he might have been naive to think that he couldn't be coerced into giving more valuable information. I expect Peter is feeling great remorse for his actions. He is aware of the pain it causes his family, his employer and himself. He is also aware how the information he had access to could cause irreparable damage to his fellowman in the USA.

Dear Judge Hilton, thank you for your consideration of this character reference.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Patrick Thoresen". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Patrick Thoresen